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FOR RELEASE:

EPA ORDERS LONG ISLAND CITY FIRM TO CLEAN UP CHEMICAL HAZARDS

NEW YORK, N.Y. -- In response to a Federal order, the owners/operators of the Nelson Galvanizing facility at 11-02 Broadway in Long Island City, New York have hired a cleanup firm to reduce the threat of a chemical incident due to the improper handling of hazardous substances at the facility. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working closely with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) to bring about a cleanup of the facility.

The Nelson Galvanizing Company facility is characterized by hazardous conditions and has a history of chemical spills. The company has now agreed to sign a consent order with EPA the terms of which address the cleanup procedures and responsibilities.

If the owners/operators had not agreed to the terms of the order, EPA was ready to undertake the work using Superfund, the federal program to clean up sites that pose an existing or potential chemical threat to the public and/or the environment.

EPA Regional Administrator Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff said, "The chemicals and conditions inside have created a high potential for a release of dangerous substances into the environment. EPA and New York City officials will oversee the cleanup operation and monitor the work inside the building very closely. It is our policy that those responsible for creating a problem such as this must pay to correct it," Eristoff added.

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Albert F. Appleton said, "Through a pattern of neglect and disregard for public health, the owners and operators of the Nelson Galvanizing facility in Long Island City have created an environmental situation which requires immediate cleanup action. Repeated orders from the city to take extensive measures to remedy the situation have been largely ignored by Nelson

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Galvanizing. The city and federal governments are now cooperating to bring about a positive and constructive response from Nelson Galvanizing, and at this time it appears to be working. We shall continue to work with EPA until a full cleanup of the Nelson Galvanizing site has been completed."

These individuals are now fully cooperating with federal and city agencies to remove the hazardous chemicals.

EPA's preliminary evaluations of the site revealed that as much as 10,000 to 15,000 gallons of bulked acids and caustic materials were being stored in leaking and corroded containers, stacked in a haphazard and precarious fashion.

Under the terms of EPA's order, the Nelson Galvanizing, Inc., Nelson Foundry, Inc. and John T. Sweeney, Jr. agreed to direct their cleanup contractor to use an expeditious, sequenced approach to the problems posed by the site: first, detailed site assessment and chemical identification, then sampling to characterize type and concentration of materials. This will be followed by contractual arrangements for proper off-site disposal and then staging for actual removal and shipment to permitted disposal facilities.

EPA estimates that it will take up to 6 months for the company's contractors to complete this cleanup of the facility.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is an active metal galvanizing facility that has been the subject of NYCDEP enforcement efforts since 1988. Past spills and ongoing releases from deteriorated drums and tanks are evidenced by stains, puddles and corrosion inside and outside the building. In 1988, the NYCDEP was obliged to undertake extensive repairs to the adjacent sidewalk and storm drains due to acidic releases believed to have originated from the site which undermined these structures. The facility owners/operators had responded insufficiently to a City cleanup order aimed at reducing the hazardous conditions at the facility.

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